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EASY LESSONS  
ON THE  
CARE OF BABIES



E. M WILKINSON

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# EASY LESSONS ON THE CARE OF BABIES

BY

E. M. WILKINSON

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LONDON

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING  
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE

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Committee on Christian Literature for Africa, 2, Eaton  
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MADE IN GREAT BRITAIN

## PREFACE

THIS little book of lessons was written as a result of many talks with African women. As my husband and I travelled from village to village we met with teachers and school-children in the schools, and there was always a group of women waiting to meet with me in the church to hear any message I could bring them. They listened most eagerly when I talked about babies and the care of children, for the shadow of disease and death hangs darkly over mothers in these villages, and those who have lost their faith in magic and the medicine provided by witch-doctors do not know how to help their children in times of illness. By their questions and the interest they showed, I soon found which of my suggestions appealed to these women as helpful and practical, and which ones were so foreign as to make no impression. It is only the former which I have included here, and the educated African must remember that the lessons are designed to help women who have had little or no education, and who find it hard to learn new things.

In many parts of Nigeria the Christian women are banded together in a Women's Guild which works for the purity of home life and the better care of children. Most branches of the Guild are under the leadership of a pastor's or teacher's wife, and I have hoped that these leaders might find such a book of lessons useful as a text-book for their monthly Guild meetings. In nearly every village there is a women's class, led by the catechist's wife, which meets every week or fortnight for

Bible study. Here, too, the lessons might be studied, and the Bible reading in connection with the lessons could be used. It is not necessary to take a whole lesson at one meeting. One or two points only need be taught, with their questions and answers. The teacher should encourage her class to talk about each suggestion and bring up any objections to it. She herself must try to give object lessons in the way she cares for her own children, or her teaching will have little effect. She should encourage the women to report any ways in which they are putting the lessons into practice, and not be too discouraged herself when there are few such reports to be made. It is only when these strange ideas become familiar that they will be accepted in practice. But the teacher must always present them to her class as something to be done, rather than a book lesson to be learned.

Many African villages are now becoming centres for the work of a trained midwife. The midwife could, I think, easily get together a class of women whom she has attended for teaching about the care of their babies, and if she is not a trained teacher, these simple lessons might be a help to her. Wherever possible, practical demonstrations are the best method of teaching.

The lessons are dedicated to my friends among the Ibo women of Southern Nigeria, who received me graciously and from whom I learned much, and to all African mothers and babies.

ELIZABETH WILKINSON.

## LESSON I. THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT BABIES

*(Bible reading : John 3 : 16, 17 ; 4 : 7-15.)*

1. GOD loves our babies more than we do.

2. God wants our babies to be strong and well. He expects us to help Him take care of them. Perhaps we may wonder, "If God wants my baby to be well, why does He let sickness come?" Sometimes it is because we are not helping Him to protect our children. It is we ourselves who wash the baby, dress him, and give him food to eat and water to drink. God provides all these things, but He does it through us. If we do not know God's laws about good food and good water and cleanliness, or if we will not take the time and trouble to obey them, then sickness will come, not by God's will, but because of our carelessness or ignorance.

3. When a baby becomes ill and dies, we must not believe that this is always God's will. Many things happen in this world that are not God's will, because men and women are sinful and ignorant. We do not obey God's laws and so we spoil His plan.

4. All sicknesses that trouble our children are caused by something. If we can find out the cause and protect our children from it, they will not become ill. Sickness does not come by itself. Each kind of illness has a cause, and most of them are caused by small things like eggs or tiny insects which get inside the body and then begin to grow and trouble us. These things are called GERMS, and they are so small that we cannot see

them unless we wear strong glasses, and yet they bring nearly all the sicknesses of which we know. Fever, dysentery, sores, headache, coughs, all come because these germs have entered our bodies and are growing there. Some of them grow big, like Guinea worm, and try to come out, making a sore on the leg. Some are always too small for us to see.



How do these germs get into our bodies? Some live in water. If we drink the water in which they live, they will enter our bodies in the water and grow there. This is how we get Guinea worm and many other bad things. We must give our children good water. Some live in dirt. If we get a cut which makes an opening in the skin, and dirt gets into the cut, these germs enter in the dirt and pass into our bodies. The cut will turn



into a sore, and other sicknesses may come. If our children are dirty, or eat food that has been lying in the dirt, germs will go into their bodies with the food. We must keep our children clean and give them clean food. Many flies carry some of these germs about on their feet, because flies often walk in dirt. Then when the fly walks on our food it leaves some of the germs on the food for us to eat. We cannot see the germs, but they go into our bodies and begin to cause sickness. We must cover our food so that flies do not walk on it.

Some of them live in the mouths of mosquitoes and flies, and may get into our bodies when the mosquito or fly bites us. This may cause sicknesses like very strong fever (malaria), or the sickness that causes some parts of the body to swell, and brings out a rash and many small troublesome nodules (Ibo—Akpu. Ibo name, Amaafia). We must cover the baby's bed at night and so keep him from being bitten by these mosquitoes and flies.

Good water is the first of three important things to learn about in caring for our babies? We have learned that water often has in it little eggs or germs which enter the body and cause sickness. Water which has these germs living in it is bad water. Water which has no germs living in it is good water. How can we know that we are giving good water to our babies to drink? We cannot see the germs; they are too small. Some water which looks very clean and good is really bad water. Sometimes we can only get dirty water to drink because the clean water is too far from our town. (We should always try to get clean water if possible.) What can we do? We can boil the water well before we give it to our babies to drink. This will kill the

germs, and when they enter the body they can do no harm.

You know that, if a hen sits on some eggs, after a time chickens will hatch from the eggs. But if we boil the eggs first and then put them under a hen,



BOIL THE WATER WELL.

chickens will never come out. The eggs are killed. So it is with germs. Remember: bad water causes much of the sickness that comes to our children. But all water can be made better by boiling it. This means that you ought to boil some water each day, and then cover the pot and let it cool. Cover the top of the pot

so that no dirt will get into the water after it is boiled. Use this water to give your babies. It will save them from many sicknesses. Do not give them water when you go to the stream. Do not give them some of the water in the basin when you are washing them. Give *only* boiled water from the pot in which it was boiled. It is much better for all people to drink boiled water. Many people have died this year from illnesses that were brought by the germs in the water they drank. But it is most important for babies because their bodies are not strong.

God wants our babies to have good water. How can they get it if we do not give it to them?

### *Questions on Lesson 1.*

1. How can we help God to keep our babies well?

*Answer:* By learning His laws about our bodies and obeying them.

2. What is the cause of many sicknesses? *Answer:*

There are tiny things called germs that live in water and dirt and the bodies of insects. They enter our bodies and multiply and cause sickness.

Can we see these germs? *Answer:* No. But they can be seen with strong glasses.

3. What is good water? *Answer:* Water that has

no germs living in it. It should also be clean to look at.

4. How can we be sure that we are giving good

water to our babies? *Answer:* By giving them only water that has been boiled.

5. Why is boiled water good? *Answer:* Because

the germs are killed and they cannot do any harm.

## LESSON 2. SOME MORE THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT BABIES

*(Bible reading : Psalm 23.)*

WE learned from the last lesson that babies need good water to drink, and that we make bad water safe by boiling it. (Dirty water will not be good for your baby even when boiled, but it will be safer than un-boiled.) Are you boiling water every day for your baby? Is this too hard to do if it will save our children from sickness?

There is something else to remember about water for babies. A baby's stomach is small, and we should give only a little water at a time. There is a bad custom which teaches us to pour water down the baby's throat until he can hold no more. The baby cries and struggles and chokes, but after a time his stomach is so full of water and he is so tired that he cannot cry any more, and then he lies quite still. This is what the mother or nurse is wanting, and they think it is good. It is not good. The baby's stomach is hurt by being filled too full, and sometimes a convulsion is caused just by this. A baby needs to drink water, but he should only have a little at a time, and slowly. Put the water in a clean cup and take a small spoon to feed it to the baby. The smallest baby will easily learn to take either water or milk from a spoon. Do not give your baby water just after he has been having milk from your breast. No baby wants water

then. His stomach is already full. When he wakes up and cries before it is time to feed him again, then give him some water. And wait until the right time comes to feed him again.

Most people think that it does not matter when a baby has his food. If the baby cries and the mother is near, she will feed him, even if he has been eating a short time before. If the mother is farming or going to market, the baby may have to wait for many hours before he is fed again. It is this that gives babies stomach trouble. They become so hungry that they take too much food too quickly when they are fed, and do not digest the mother's milk well. Or, if they are fed too often, the stomach has no chance to rest and cannot do its work well.

Remember : A baby's stomach is very small. It cannot hold much at one time. Therefore he needs to be fed about once every three hours in the day and, when the baby is very young, once in the middle of the night if he awakens. When the baby grows older (after the first six weeks) it is better not to feed him at night. Give him water if he awakens, and he will soon learn to sleep all night. Remember, too, that a baby's stomach needs to rest. If you feed your child whenever he cries, the stomach will not get a chance to rest. This causes loose bowels in some babies. In others it may cause constipation. Try to begin, when your baby is first born, feeding him every three hours, but not oftener than that. The baby will learn quickly to expect its food at the right time, and will not trouble you. This means you will feed your baby when he wakes in the morning ; again about nine o'clock after school begins ; again at noon when the sun is highest ;

again about three o'clock after school finishes ; again when it is beginning to grow dark ; again before you go to sleep ; once in the night if he wakes ; and again when he wakes in the morning. After you have fed the baby, do not put him down at once, even if he is asleep. Hold him up against your shoulder with his stomach pressed to your body, and pat his back gently (until you hear him hiccough or gulp once or twice). That means that the wind which entered his body while he was drinking has now gone away. Put him down now and he will sleep well. If you lay him down before the wind has come up he will not have strength to gulp it up himself, and it will cause pain and noises in the stomach.

A small baby will grow faster and be stronger if he lies down between feedings, instead of being always held or carried about. It is very bad for a baby to be carried all the time by another child. It is also very bad for the child who carries him. A child's bones are soft, and if he stands and walks crookedly, as he does when carrying a baby, the bones grow crooked and the body is injured. *Never* give your baby to a small child to carry. You can teach your baby to go to sleep on a mat after he is fed, and he will not expect to be carried about all the time. Begin, when the baby is first born, laying him down on a mat after he has had his food. He will be quite satisfied if he has not learned a different way at first. The mat is easy to wash and keep clean ; but you should put a clean piece of old cloth under the baby and between his legs to keep him dry.

Remember : A baby needs to be kept clean. Try to give your baby a bath in warm water every day. He

will like it very much if you do not put soap in his eyes. Soap hurts the eyes very much, and there is no need to put any on the baby's face at all. Soap his body and his hair, but put plain water on his face. Do not give the baby water to drink from the basin in which you are washing him. If you keep your baby



BABY'S DAILY BATH.

clean and give him only clean water to drink, and allow only clean people to hold him, he will not get any kind of skin disease like *craw-craw* or sores.

Remember to wash your baby *before* he has his food not afterwards. As soon as he is washed and dry, feed him, and put him down to sleep. He will sleep well, and you will have time to rest or do other work.

A baby needs to be quiet, not moving about, after he is fed.

We have now seen three ways in which we can help God to keep our babies well: (1) By giving boiled water, and not too much at a time. (2) By feeding the baby regularly and letting him lie down and sleep after feeding—not always being carried about or held. (3) By keeping him clean. These are all very important. Do not forget them because they are not your customs. They were not the custom in England in old times, but many of our babies died until people began to learn new and better customs. Now most of our babies live to grow up. This is because we have learned to obey God's laws better.

### *Questions on Lesson 2.*

1. Is it good to give babies as much water as they can hold? *Answer* : No. This hurts the baby's stomach and may cause convulsions.

2. How should we give water to a baby, and when? *Answer* : We should put boiled water in a clean cup and give it to the baby with a small spoon, slowly. We should give him water between feedings, not just before or just after feeding the baby.

3. How often should a baby be fed? *Answer* : Every three hours in the day.

4. Why is it good to feed a baby regularly, and not just at any time that is convenient? *Answer* : Because the baby will digest his food better, and the stomach will have a chance to rest.

5. What should we do after the baby has been fed? *Answer* : We should hold him up and pat him until



some wind comes up, and then put him down quietly to sleep.

6. Why is it bad to hold a baby or carry him about all the time? *Answer*: Because he does not sleep and grow so well, and it may injure the child who carries him.

7. How can we teach our babies to want their food at the right time and to be satisfied to lie on a mat by themselves without giving trouble? *Answer*: By feeding them regularly when they are first born and putting them down to sleep after each feeding. They will not expect anything else.

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### LESSON 3. FOOD

(*Bible reading : Luke 11. 5-13.*)

THE most important thing for a baby or a young child is the food it gets to eat. Babies grow very fast. This means that their bodies are making new bones, new blood, new skin and hair and flesh all the time. If this growing body is to be strong, it must have good food, and the right kind of food.

African people see pictures of English babies ; they say : “ How big they are ! They are much bigger and fatter than ours.” Why is this ? With young babies, who get only their mother’s milk to drink, it is because the English babies lie down most of the day and sleep. This makes them grow larger and stronger. A baby that is held and carried about all day does not have a chance to grow so well. But after the babies begin to eat other food, not only the mother’s milk, English babies grow large and strong because they get very good food of the right kind to make them grow. Many African babies do not get enough of the right kind of food.

What food does a baby need ? We all know that the best food for the first six or seven months is the mother’s milk. After that the milk is not enough for a big baby and we need to give something more. What shall we give ? Many people begin to feed their children with *agedi* or *akamu*, which is made from corn and which Hausa people make and sell. This is very

good. It is the best thing to use if you can get it. Some people give their babies rice or boiled yam. These are much harder for a young baby to digest, but if you cook them for a long, long time until they are very soft, they will be good for the baby. Pounded yam, or yam that has been boiled only a short time, is



FEEDING BABY.

not good for babies. The baby cannot digest it well, and most of the food is wasted. It will often cause stomach trouble. Do not let the older children give your baby some of their own food, and never let children give a baby unripe fruit like limes or guavas or pineapple to suck. It will cause pain and may bring dysentery. (We should probably use the right term

“diarrhoea,” though most Africans call it “dysentery.”) Remember to cook any food like rice, yam or agedi much longer for a baby than you do for yourself.

But the baby needs other things to eat. You know there are many different kinds of things in the body. There are bones, there is blood, there is skin, and there are the muscles or flesh and the fat. All these are made by the food we eat, but different foods make different things. Some foods help to make the bones grow strong, some help to make blood, some make muscles and fat. If we eat only one kind of food we may grow fat, but our bones will be weak and our blood will not be good. We need different kinds of food to make a strong body. In the mother’s milk there is everything that a baby’s body needs, but as he grows bigger the milk is not enough for him, and we must give him other kinds of food to make him grow well. If you give your baby enough of the right kinds of food during the first two or three years of his life (the time when he is growing fastest) he will probably be strong and well all his life. I want to tell you of some foods that will help your baby to be strong. They are all things that you can get easily, but most people in this country do not know that they are good for babies.

1. *Eggs*.—Egg is one of the best foods for babies. There is something in the egg which helps to make strong bones and flesh. When your baby is six months old try to give him some egg with his food. The egg must be fresh, not more than two or three days old. Old eggs will be very bad for a baby. You must begin by giving only a little each day, for the baby’s stomach is not used to this new food. Take a fresh uncooked egg and break it into a clean cup. It will be best to

pour away the watery "white" of the egg and use only the yellow or yolk. Mix it up well with a spoon or fork. Then put a small spoonful of the egg in with the agedi or other food you are giving. Mix it well and the baby will not know he is getting anything new. Next day use another spoonful. Then you must throw away what remains of the egg, for it will not be good to use again. Wait for a day or two, and then take another egg prepared in the same way. This time put a little more egg with his food. In this way give a little more each time until the baby is eating a whole egg in two days, once or twice a week. You must watch to see if the baby's bowels become loose after first having the egg. If so, do not give any more until this is all right again. Be very careful not to give too much at first.

2. *Ripe bananas* are good for babies over six months old. Do not give the baby the banana to hold, for he will get it dirty and eat the dirt too. Remove the skin and fibre and any over-ripe spots, then mash the banana in a plate and feed it to the baby with a spoon. A little Ideal Milk or sweet milk mixed with it is also good.

3. *Native spinach*, or green-leaf, is good for babies if you cook it, pound it, and make it soft. When you kill a goat or a fowl, take a piece of bone with some meat on it, and cook it slowly in a little water with some spinach. Put a little salt with this, but no pepper. When it has cooked a long time, take the bone and meat out and give the baby the water and the spinach, which will be like soup. This will help a weak, thin baby to grow strong.

4. The juice of *ripe oranges* is one of the best things we can give our babies. Many people think that

oranges give stomach trouble to babies, but this is only true when you let the baby hold the orange himself and eat all the hard part with the juice. You should cut the orange, squeeze the juice into a cup, and feed the baby with a spoon. Give only a spoonful or two at first, and then more after a few days. The baby will soon like it very much, and it will help to keep him free from constipation. Begin giving your baby orange juice when he is three months old, and try to give him some every day whenever oranges are ripe.

5. *Cow's and goat's milk and butter* are very good for babies, but the milk should be boiled to kill germs.

### *Questions on Lesson 3.*

1. Why do we need different kinds of food? *Answer:* Because different foods help to make the different parts of our body. Some make bones, some make blood, some make fat. The only food which gives us everything the body needs is milk.

2. What is the best food for a small baby? *Answer:* His mother's milk.

3. Is the mother's milk enough for a baby over six months old? *Answer:* No, we should begin giving the baby other food then.

4. What are the best foods to give the baby at first? *Answer:* Agedi and akamu are the best. Rice or yam which has been cooked very soft is good. Cook very much longer for the baby.

5. What other foods are good for babies? *Answer:* Ripe bananas, fresh eggs, orange juice, and the water in which some meat and spinach has been cooked are all good for babies over six months old. Also butter (a small piece) and boiled milk of cows or goats.

## LESSON 4. STOMACH TROUBLES

(*Bible reading : Mark 5 : 22-24, 35-42.*)

WE have learned about the three things which babies need more than anything else in order to be strong and well. These are good food, good water (this means boiled water), and clean bodies. Now I want to talk about some of the sicknesses which trouble our children. We will try to learn what brings the sickness, how we can keep it away from our children, and what we can do to cure it if it comes.

The first sickness is something we can call stomach trouble. This means (1) loose bowels, which may grow worse and become dysentery ; (2) constipation, which causes headaches and pain in the stomach.

Loose bowels or diarrhœa can be caused by over-feeding, or by bad water, or by eating unripe fruit or rotten fruit, or (with a young baby) by eating food which has not been cooked long enough, or eating dirty food, or sucking dirty hands. If you give your baby boiled water, feed him at regular times (not just whenever he cries), cook his food a long time, do not allow the other children to give him their food or pieces of fruit, like limes, guavas, or mangoes, and keep his body and hands clean, he is not likely to get diarrhœa. But even with good care a baby will sometimes get this kind of trouble. What can you do to cure it ?

If it is only a little looseness of the bowels, you can

stop it by giving him less of your own milk and no other kind of food at all until he is better. Give him plenty of boiled water to drink. If it is really bad, you must give the baby a dose of castor-oil. Give half a teaspoonful if he is under three months old, and one teaspoonful if he is six months old. A little more for older babies. After giving the castor-oil, do not feed the baby at all for twelve hours. Give him plenty of boiled water to drink. I know that this will be hard to do for the baby will be hungry and cry for food, but if you want him to get well quickly you must be strong and wait for one day before feeding him. After twelve hours give him a little breast-milk, but do not feed him as much as he wants for two or three days, or the trouble may begin again. If, when you have done all this, the diarrhœa still goes on, you should try to take the baby to a doctor or dispenser and get some stronger medicine. If you cannot do this, give another dose of castor-oil, a little more than the first time, and stop feeding the baby for another twelve hours. This will probably save the baby's life if you are strong enough to do it.

2. *Constipation*.—If you feed your baby too much, or if you do not feed him at regular times, it may cause loose bowels or it may cause constipation. If you are constipated yourself, your milk will probably make the baby constipated too. Try to drink more water yourself, and eat plenty of fruit like oranges and paw-paw. This will help both you and the baby. Give the baby plenty of water to drink between the times when you feed him. Give him *orange juice* every day. This is very good medicine for constipation. If you rub the baby's stomach gently round and round for a few



minutes each day this will also help the bowels to move. Senna pods or leaves can usually be bought in the market. These are good for constipation. Soak a few of the pods or leaves in a glass or cup of cold water. Use water which has been boiled. Leave this over-night. In the morning take two large tablespoonfuls of the water. If you give to the baby, give one or two small teaspoonfuls. If this does not act well, take more—a large dose—next morning. If you have done all these things and the bowels do not move, then you must give some castor-oil. Do not give this unless you must, for it will make the baby constipated again afterwards. Sometimes a little sugar melted in warm water will help constipation. Spinach is also helpful for older babies. And orange juice will always help. The most important thing is to feed your baby at regular times, give him water between feedings, and orange juice if possible. It is not good to let your baby take the strong medicine which the dibia, or native doctor, will give. This is too strong for young children. It will make the bowels move, but it can cause bad trouble afterwards.

#### *Questions on Lesson 4.*

1. What are some of the things that bring loose bowels or diarrhœa? *Answer:* Over-feeding, irregular feeding, bad water, food that has not been cooked long enough, unripe fruits, and dirty food can all give this trouble.

2. What is the medicine for looseness of the bowels? *Answer:* Senna—soak the pods or leaves in cold water over-night; castor-oil—one half-teaspoonful for babies

under three months, one teaspoonful for babies six months old, and a little more for older babies.

3. What should we do after giving castor-oil? *Answer:* We should give the baby plenty of boiled water to drink, but *no food* or milk for twelve hours.

4. If the looseness of the bowels does not stop a day or two after you have given castor-oil, what should you do? *Answer:* Take the baby to a doctor if possible, or give another larger dose of castor-oil and no food for another twelve hours. This may save the baby's life. If there is a doctor at hand, don't wait to experiment if you want to save the baby's life. Go to the doctor at once.

5. What causes constipation? *Answer:* It is often caused by over-feeding the baby, or by feeding him too often, or not regularly, or the water may be hard, or the mother constipated.

6. How can you avoid constipation? *Answer:* By feeding the baby at regular times, giving him plenty of good boiled water to drink, and orange juice every day. Also by rubbing his stomach gently. If there is constipation, we must give senna-water or castor-oil, or try to get some medicine from a doctor.

## LESSON 5. FEVER

*(Bible reading : Luke 4 : 34-41.)*

IN the rainy season and in the cold weather about Christmas-time many babies get coughs and colds and fever. Let us try to learn what brings these bad things. First we will think about fever. There is one kind of fever which comes with a cough. But the kind of fever that our children get most often is brought by the bites of mosquitoes. When the mosquito bites your baby, some of the small eggs or germs I told you about pass from the mosquito's mouth into the baby's body. Then they grow and increase in numbers and bring fever. When the first missionaries came to this country they did not know that fever came from mosquito bites. They used to sleep without mosquito tents, and many of them died after a few months. Now that we know we must sleep under mosquito tents very few white people get fever. Many babies die in this country every year because of the germs entering their bodies from mosquito bites. Try to keep your baby away from mosquitoes and flies. When he is sleeping, cover him with a thin cloth, if possible a mosquito net. It is good to have a large box or basket to put your baby in when he is asleep. You can put a thin cloth or net over this so that it does not touch the baby's face and yet keeps all the flies and mosquitoes out. If your baby has fever every evening

and during the night for a few days, and if he should have a convulsion with it, you may know that this is the kind of fever brought by mosquito bites. We call this fever malaria. It sometimes makes the child's belly grow large and hard (especially on the left side), and this causes much pain.

The *cure* for malarial fever is quinine. Try to get some quinine powders from a doctor or dispenser. Be sure to tell the age of your baby, for the medicine for a grown person will be too strong for a child. Give the baby two powders each day for about eight days. Do not give the quinine while the body is hot. It will do no good then. Wait until the fever has gone away and the child's body is cool. Then is the time to give the medicine. It will then work to keep the fever from coming back. Malarial fever usually begins in the afternoon, so the right time to give the medicine is before midday and again at night when the fever is going away. Be sure to keep the baby wrapped up warmly, or in a warm place, while he has fever, and especially when the fever is going away. Although his body is hot, he feels the cold very much, and if he is not kept warm he may get much worse. If the baby has a convulsion, you should put him in a basin of warm water near the fire, and when the convulsion is over wrap him in a warm cloth and keep him *quiet* near the fire. A wet, cool cloth on his head may also help. Let him sleep as long as possible after the convulsion. Do not allow anyone to wake him. When he wakes give him a small dose of castor-oil, and try to get quinine to give him next day and for a week after that. Remember that one dose of quinine is not much good. You should give it every day for seven or eight days.

Remember that mosquitoes bring fever. They like to lay their eggs in water or damp bush. Let us look round the houses and compound every day to see that there is no water standing in old tins or in holes near the house. We can teach the older children to help in this work. Let us ask the father to clear the grass and bush near the house. If the mosquitoes cannot lay their eggs near our houses there will not be so many to bring fever to our children.

Convulsions are caused by constipation, by filling a baby with water until the stomach is too full, by trouble with cutting teeth, and by the worms which many children get inside their bodies from drinking bad water or eating dirty food. A baby will often get a convulsion and fever when his teeth are coming through. If possible, try to get some medicine for constipation for your baby from a doctor or dispenser. This is better than castor-oil, except for curing coughs and dysentery. The medicine will probably be like powder, wrapped in small pieces of paper. Give one of these powders instead of castor-oil after a convulsion, or when the baby is badly constipated.

#### *Questions on Lesson 5.*

1. What causes fever? *Answer* : Babies have fever sometimes when they have coughs and colds, and when they are cutting teeth, but most commonly fever arises from the bites of mosquitoes. We call this fever malaria.

2. How can we protect our babies from mosquitoes? *Answer* : By keeping them away from places where mosquitoes are bad, and by covering them with a mosquito net when they are sleeping, and using a mosquito

tent on the bed, and by keeping the compound free from standing water. Keep the baby inside the house after dark.

3. What is the medicine for fever? *Answer:* Quinine.

4. What is the right time to give this medicine? *Answer:* Begin when the body is cool and continue morning and evening.

5. How often should we give quinine? *Answer:* Twice daily for eight days at least, even if the fever has stopped.

6. Does a baby need to be kept warm when he has fever? *Answer:* Yes. Although his body is hot, he himself is feeling cold. Keep him covered well, or in a warm place.

7. What causes convulsions? *Answer:* Worms, constipation, too much water at a time, cutting teeth.

8. What can we do when a baby has a convulsion? *Answer:* Put him in a basin of warm water, or wrap him in warm wet clothes if you have a dry blanket to wrap around him outside; put a cool wet cloth on his head, and when he is better wrap him in a warm cloth and let him sleep quietly. Give medicine for constipation when he wakes. Give quinine if he has been having fever. Keep him *quiet*.

## LESSON 6. COUGHS AND COLDS

*(Bible reading : Proverbs 9. 6-18.)*

You know all about coughs and colds and the trouble they give to our children. When a child has a cough he usually has a head-cold also. This means that a thick white mucus, something like oil, collects at the back of his nose, and makes it hard for him to breathe. It also gives him headache sometimes. He will usually have fever with it ; it is all part of the sickness. What is it caused by ? One thing that brings it is cold damp weather, or anything which makes the baby feel cold. It also comes from being with people who already have colds and coughs themselves. The sickness may pass from one person to another. When you cough some thin mucus like water comes out of your mouth, and perhaps it falls on another person. In this water are some of the little germs which bring this sickness. When they fall on a person and enter his body through his mouth or nose they bring the sickness to him. The germs are also in the mucus or oil which comes from the nose of anyone who has a cold. This also easily passes to another body, bringing the sickness with it. If you yourself have a cough or a cold you will nearly always give it to your baby unless you are very careful to turn away from him when you cough or sneeze, and to keep your hands and face clean. Do not let anyone who has a cold hold your baby. The baby will nearly always get a cold too.

When the weather is damp and cold, people begin to feel cold in their bodies. If you are moving about, doing some work or playing some game, it will not do any harm to feel cold; but if you feel cold while you are sitting still or lying down, you should try to put on some warm clothes and make a fire to keep warm. The cold you feel will probably bring fever and cough unless you get warm quickly. This is very important for babies. They cannot run about like older children and make themselves warm. They feel cold much more than grown people. When it is warm and sunny your baby does not need to wear any clothes. It is good for the sun to shine on his body. But when it is rainy and cold, and at night when the cold wind blows, your baby needs to be *covered up warmly* or to be kept near a fire. If he feels the cold in his body and has no way of getting warm, fever and cough will soon begin. This is a very important thing to remember about babies. They need to be kept warm. Babies often get cold when they are being washed. The mother feels warm herself and does not remember that when the baby is wet he will feel cold quickly. Always try to wash your baby in the sunshine where it is warm or near a fire inside the house. Remember that when the body is chilled with cold, cough and fever will very likely come.

Suppose your baby has a bad cough and cold. What can you do to help him get well? The most important thing of all is to keep him warm. Try to keep a fire in the room at night where he sleeps. Try to keep him covered with a blanket at night and, if it is cold, in the daytime. If you have no blankets, keep the baby well rubbed all over his body with cocoanut-



oil. This should be washed off and put on fresh every day. It will help to keep the baby warm. Do not let him feel cold at all, and he will get well quickly.

Give him one dose of castor-oil. This usually helps a cough. Half a small teaspoonful if he is under three months, one teaspoonful if he is six months old, and a little more if he is older. Try to get some honey and mix with the juice of a lime (use about two limes with half a cupful of honey). Keep this in a bottle and give the baby a little in a small spoon when the cough is troubling him. If you can buy some rubbing medicine, rub the baby's chest and back with this two or three times a day. You should rub gently for five minutes and then cover the chest with a warm cloth. Do this when the baby coughs at night, and give him a little of the honey and lime. Be sure that he is dry and warm. If you cannot buy rubbing medicine, you can make some by putting a little native pepper into some palm-oil or ground-nut-oil and heating it in a cup by the fire. Do not put too much pepper, or it will burn the baby's skin. If you rub the chest with this warm oil it will help the cough. Try to keep the baby's nose clean and dry. Wind a small piece of cloth round the end of a little stick, dip it in some oil, and wipe out the inside of the nose with it. Be careful not to hurt the nose. The baby will not like this, but it will help him to breathe freely and make him more comfortable. Give him plenty of orange juice to drink every day if you can get it.

One more thing that will help a cold. This is sunshine. When the sun is shining put your baby out on a mat so that the sun will shine on his body. Keep his head covered or in the shade, but do not put anything

over his body. Do this in the morning or afternoon, not in the middle of the day when the sun is too hot. There is a medicine in the sunshine which helps many kinds of sicknesses, and especially coughs and colds.

*Questions on Lesson 6.*

1. What brings coughs and colds? *Answer:* The germs we carry in our bodies, feeling cold, and being near other people who are coughing and sneezing.

2. How can we protect our babies from coughs? *Answer:* By keeping them warm, especially at night, and by keeping them away from other people who have coughs and colds.

3. What medicine is good for this? *Answer:* One dose of castor-oil. Also some honey mixed with lime juice, given in a small spoon two or three times a day when the cough is bad. Orange juice.

4. What else can we do to help a cough or cold to get well? *Answer:* Keep the baby warm. Keep his nose clean. Rub his chest and back with medicine or warm oil, and cover the chest with a warm cloth. Put him in the sunshine as much as you can. Give him orange juice every day.

## LESSON 7. SKIN TROUBLE

(*Reading : Luke 7 : 12-19 and Matt. 10 : 8*).

IF we see many children playing together, we nearly always see a few who have sores of different kinds on their bodies. We call these skin diseases. Almost all skin diseases are caused by dirt. Christian children do not have them as much as non-Christian because they keep their bodies and their clothes cleaner, and they live in cleaner homes. The baby of a Christian mother who is washed each day will not get yaws or craw-craw easily. But skin diseases are like coughs. They pass from one person to another. Do not let anyone who has yaws or craw-craw hold your baby. The baby will probably get this trouble too.

The worst skin disease of all is *leprosy*. This disease is passed from one person to another by the little germs we know about. A leper has a little mucus coming out from his nose and ears. The germs are in this mucus, and in the sores on his body. If you lie on a bed where a leper has slept, or wear any of his clothes, or eat food with him, some of the eggs may enter your body and bring you the disease. No children are born with leprosy, but the baby of a mother who is a leper will soon get the disease from his mother. *Remember* that there is now a cure for leprosy, and there are places where people can go to get cured. There is one of these places at Itu in Nigeria. The lepers who go

there live in a good village built for them, and they get medicine from a doctor each week. If they go soon enough before the disease gets very bad, they can be cured. And even bad cases can be helped. If there are any lepers in your town try to help them to go to Itu. Perhaps they do not know there is such a place. Perhaps they do not know how to get there. Remember that Christ told us to help lepers. We can do this now by helping any lepers that we know to go to a place where they will be cared for and perhaps cured.

*Yaws* is another very bad skin disease. It does not only cause the bad sores which we see at first, but it leaves some poison in the blood of the child which brings other kinds of sickness after many years. Do all you can to keep your child away from yaws. Keep the body and his clothes clean. Do not let him play with other children who have yaws. If he does get it, try your best to take him to the nearest doctor for injections. The injections will cure the sores, and they will also drive the poison out of the body so that there will be no trouble later.

*Craw-craw* is a disease many children get. It comes from dirt. The medicine for it is chrysophanic ointment, which you can buy from a dispenser or doctor. You must wash the child's body in soapy water, and when he is dry put some of the ointment wherever you see the *craw-craw*. The next day you must wash all this off with soapy water again, and put on fresh ointment. If the child is wearing clothes you must boil these and put them in the sun to dry before he wears them again. Wash the mat which he sleeps on, or the cloth, and dry it in the sun. The little eggs which bring *craw-craw* are in the clothes, and they will

enter the body again if they are not first killed by being boiled. Some other skin diseases can be cured with sulphur powder used in this same way. This is cheap and easy to get.

Many of the *sores* which children get on their legs and arms, and sometimes on other parts of their bodies, are started first by a cut, or by falling down against a stone or stick, or anything which tears the skin and makes blood flow. If this cut place is kept clean it will quickly heal and get well, but if dirt enters it will probably make a sore which grows large and takes a long time to heal. This is because of the eggs which are in the dirt and enter the body through the cut. Whenever you see that your child has cut himself take time to wash the place with clean water. Use some of the water that has been boiled for this, and a clean piece of cloth. Then put a little vaseline on the cut, if you have it, and tie a piece of clean cloth over it so that no dirt can go in. When that cloth is dirty take it off, wash the place again, and put on a clean cloth. If you have no small pieces of cloth to use for this, cover the cut with some of the white, watery part of a fresh egg. This will soon dry over the cut and keep out dirt for a time. To do this, take a new egg (an old one is no use) and make a small hole in one end. Hold the egg over a cup and shake it. The white part will run out into the cup, leaving the yellow inside the shell. A little of this will cover a large place. Keep what remains covered in the cup, ready to use again.

If your child has sores which do not get well, it may be because he is not getting good food. A weak body cannot heal quickly like a strong one. Try to get some milk for him. Cod-liver-oil and fresh eggs will help to

make him strong ; plenty of fruit and good soup made with spinach and meat will also help.

There is also a bad disease called hook-worm which gets into the body through cuts on the feet and legs. When a person has this disease the germs pass from his body in his excreta. If another person with cuts on his feet or legs walks on the excreta the germs may easily pass into his body and bring the disease to him. This kind of disease makes the children very weak and thin.

*Burns.*—Many children burn themselves with hot water or fire, and are very badly hurt. The white part of a fresh egg is the best medicine you can use for burns if you put it on at once. As soon as the child is burned, take some white of egg and cover the burned places. This will quickly help the pain and it will keep out dirt. When the white of egg dries and begins to crack, put on more. Do not use anything else for the first day. After that put on vaseline or oil. Do not put cloth over a place that has been burned. It will stick to the child's body and cause trouble.

### *Questions on Lesson 7.*

1. What causes skin troubles? *Answer* : Most skin trouble is caused by dirt, or by being close to other people who have the trouble. Drinking dirty water and washing in dirty water brings skin disease.

2. What can we do to keep our children from getting skin trouble? *Answer* : We can keep their bodies and clothes clean, give them clean water and clean food, and keep them away from people who have sores.

3. Can leprosy be cured? *Answer* : Yes, if medicine is given when the sickness begins.

4. Where can lepers go for treatment? *Answer:* To the nearest medical mission or hospital or leper colony where lepers are treated (*for Ibos:* To Itu Medical Mission).

5. Why is yaws a bad disease? *Answer:* Because it leaves some poison in the body which brings other kinds of sickness after the sores are cured.

6. What is the cure for yaws? *Answer:* Injections.

7. What is the medicine for craw-craw? *Answer:* Chrysophanic ointment.

8. How must we use this medicine? *Answer:* We must wash the child in soapy water, and when he is dry put on the ointment.

9. How often must we do this? *Answer:* Every day until the craw-craw is better.

10. What about his clothes? *Answer:* We must boil them and let them dry in the sun before he wears them again.

11. What causes sores? *Answer:* They are often caused by dirt getting into a cut or scratch.

12. What can we do to prevent sores? *Answer:* We must wash cuts with clean water and cover them with a clean cloth or white of egg.

13. What is the best thing to do when a child is burned? *Answer:* White of egg is the medicine for burns. Take a new egg and make a small hole in one end. Shake it over a cup. The white will run into the cup.

## LESSON 8. MOTHERLESS BABIES

(*Bible reading : Matt. 25 : 34-35 ; Mark 9 : 36, 37.*)

MANY people in this country think that if the mother of a new-born baby dies the baby must die also. This is not true. With care the baby can be saved, and Christian people ought to try to save any baby born in their town whose mother dies. There are three ways of caring for a motherless baby. The best way is for some woman who has a new baby of her own to take the motherless baby and feed it with her own child. I know that this is a strange custom for African people, but it is one that Christians ought to follow. Christ commands us to love our neighbours as we love ourselves. That means that we must love the child of our neighbour as we love our own children. No woman would let her own child starve, and give it no food. We have no right to let any child of God starve when we have food to give it. Many women fear that if they take another baby to feed with their own, their own baby will not get enough to eat. This is not true. If you are strong and well, and if you eat good food and *drink plenty of water*, you will have milk enough for two children. God has made a wonderful plan so that each woman will have the milk that her child needs. If the baby is small the milk is small. If the baby is large there is milk enough. So, if there are two babies, there will be milk enough for two. Suppose a woman



dies in your town, leaving a little baby. If you have a baby of nearly the same age, Christ is asking you to take the motherless child and care for it. It is a shame to all Christian women when a child is left to die because no one will feed it. What can you answer at the last day when Christ says, "I was hungry, and you gave me no food"? You may say, "I never saw you hungry, Lord"; but will He not say, "You saw that little child of mine who had no mother to feed it and you refused to care for it. Inasmuch as you did it not unto one of these little ones, you did it not to me"?

There is another way of feeding a motherless baby. This is to use milk from cows or goats. If you can get fresh milk, this will be best for the baby, but it should always be boiled. A young baby cannot digest cows' or goats' milk unless water is added to it, or it is mixed with lemon juice.

This is the way to prepare the milk: In the morning, take one cup of new milk and two cups of water. Boil these together for five minutes after the mixture begins to boil, and add five lumps of sugar or five teaspoons of syrup or honey. Also a little of some kind of fat—butter, cream, palm-oil, or cod-liver-oil if you can get it. Use about one teaspoonful at first, increasing as the baby grows. Now put the boiled milk into a clean glass jar with a cover, or cover it in the pot in which it was boiled. Set this into a large earthen pot containing cool water. This will keep the milk fresh until next morning. A new baby will take four or five tablespoons of milk at each feeding, and the milk must be warmed. Pour out what you need each time into a cup, and set the cup in a basin containing very hot water. Feed the baby from this, throwing away any

that remains in the cup after feeding. Always wash the cup and spoon in boiling water before using it.

*As Baby Grows.*—As the baby grows he will want more and stronger milk. At two months use one and one-half cups of milk and two cups of water. At three months use two cups of milk and two cups of water. At six months use three cups of milk and one and one-half cups of water. Before he is a year old he will drink the milk alone, with no water added.

If you can get lemons, boil as much milk as you need for the day (about three cups for a new baby) and add sugar and honey and a little butter or oil. Let the milk get quite cold. Then stir in slowly the juice of one-half a lemon. The milk may turn thick when you add the lemon juice, but this does not matter. Most babies can digest this lemon-milk very well, and like it.

If the baby cries much, he is probably not getting enough food. Give him more at each feeding, or if he will not take more, put more milk and less water when you prepare the food. If he vomits some of the milk, it is probably too strong. Put more water with the milk and less sugar. Be patient, trying different mixtures, until you find something which suits the baby. He will tell you when his food is right by growing well and crying little.

There is still another way of feeding a motherless baby. This is to use milk out of a tin. If you use Ideal Milk, prepare it in this way: Boil some water, and wash the cup and spoon. Put four tablespoonfuls of boiling water into the cup and one tablespoonful of Ideal Milk, with half a lump of sugar. Stir it well, and feed the baby with a teaspoon which you have first dipped into the boiling water (putting the spoon into

boiling water means that it will be perfectly clean). Always throw away any of the mixture that is left, but try to make the baby take it all if possible. Many babies will continue to eat even after they are asleep if you keep putting a little milk into their mouths. *You must take time and have patience.* Open a new tin of Ideal Milk every two days, for it will not be good on the third day after being opened. As the baby grows bigger put more water and milk into each feeding. When he is six months old he should have about nine tablespoonfuls of water and three of milk.

If you use sweet milk, try to get Nestlé's Full Cream Condensed Milk. No other kind is good for babies. Prepare in the same way as Ideal, but put only two *small* teaspoonfuls of milk with four *big* tablespoonfuls of water, and do not put sugar. Put more milk as the baby grows, until you are using one tablespoonful of milk with seven tablespoonfuls of water. (See proportions given on tin.)

It is very important to give any baby who is being fed on tinned milk some orange juice once a day. Begin to use agedi when the baby is five or six months old.

*Remember* that a motherless baby needs more care than one that is getting natural food from its mother. Keep the baby warm and clean. Give him only *boiled* water with milk to drink. And remember that when you receive one of God's children for the sake of Jesus Christ and in His name of Love you are receiving Christ himself, and all that you do will be a blessing to you and your house and your town.

*Questions on Lesson 8.*

1. What are some ways of saving a motherless baby?

*Answer:* A woman who has a baby of the same age may take the motherless one and feed it with her own child. Or we can use milk from a tin.

2. Which is the better of these ways? *Answer:* The first. It gives less trouble, is not expensive, and the baby has a better chance to live and grow strong.

3. If a mother takes another baby to feed with her own child, will she have milk enough for two? *Answer:* Yes, if she is strong herself, and if she eats good food and drinks plenty of water.

4. If we give the baby goat's milk to drink, how should we prepare the milk? *Answer:* Boil one cup of new milk and two cups of water for five minutes. Add five lumps of sugar and a little fat. Give four or five tablespoonfuls of this mixture at each feeding. As the baby grows older use more milk and less water; give larger feedings.

5. How often should the goat be milked? Morning and evening into a perfectly clean basin. We must keep the milk covered in a clean cup or basin.

6. If the baby does not take all the milk we have prepared, what should we do with the rest, and why? *Answer:* We should throw it away and wash the cup and spoon. If we give the baby cold milk it will cause stomach trouble—pain, perhaps loose bowels or vomiting.

7. Why is tinned milk not as good to use for a baby as goat's milk? *Answer:* Because it is very expensive and babies do not digest it easily.

8. What is the best kind of tinned milk to use? *Answer:* Nestlé's Full Cream Condensed Milk. If you cannot get this, use Ideal.

## LESSON 9. OTHER POINTS TO REMEMBER

(*Bible reading : 2 Kings 5 : 1-14.*)

1. MANY mothers and midwives in Africa think that when a baby is born they should try to make the navel cord come away as soon as possible. To do this they pull at the cord, so that it comes off a day or two after the baby is born. This is a bad thing to do, because the navel comes out into a point which is called hernia. This makes the child's body look ugly, and it makes him weak. A child with a hernia is never quite strong. God's way is to leave the navel cord to dry up, and come away by itself about the sixth or seventh day. It is good to keep it dry with some powder and covered with a clean cloth, which can be held in place by another cloth tied firmly around the baby's middle. The cord should *never* be pulled. If it is pulled and comes away too soon, leaving a sore, the baby may get a very bad disease called lockjaw and die in a few days.

2. When a baby is born, do not allow the mother to be put out on the ground in the compound. She may take cold, or germs from the dirt may enter her body and cause very bad fever. Many women die because of this. The mother should lie on a clean mat or cloth and be kept warm.

Lay the baby on a warm clean cloth as soon as it is born, not in the sand. Keep him warm, and use only warm clean water and clean cloth when you wash him,

and clean warm cloth to wrap him in. It is best to use clean warm oil to rub on a new baby before washing him (most nurses think oil safer for new babies than water, and a more effective cleansing agent). Begin using water about the third day.

When the cord is cut, first tie it with a clean string above the place where it is to be cut. Then take scissors or a knife, that has first been boiled or washed with hot water and soap, or use a hot iron, to sever the cord. A dirty instrument used to cut the cord may give the baby lockjaw and cause his death. After the cord is cut, bind it with clean cloth as explained above.

Do not allow your baby's face or body to be tattooed. This may cause very bad sickness. It is an old custom, but we ought not to follow it when we know it may do harm to our children.

If your baby is a boy, and he is to be circumcised, see that the knife used is boiled first; this will kill the germs which might bring trouble to your child. Give the person who is doing the circumcision some clean water and soap to wash his hands *before* he touches your baby, and give him a clean cloth (it is best to boil and iron a piece of cloth for this purpose) to put on the wound. Keep the wound covered with a little vaseline (or clean oil) and clean cloth until it is healed. It will heal quickly if you do this.

3. Sometimes when a baby is having some pain and trouble in his stomach he will cry for a long time. People often try to stop this crying by shaking the baby up and down, or giving him more food, or by giving a lot of water. The best way to make the baby feel comfortable and to stop crying is first to hold him up on your shoulder with his stomach pressed against

your chest and pat his back. This will help him to bring up any wind in his stomach and make the pain better. Then hold him in your arms so that his head lies on your arm and his stomach is pressed against your body, and walk up and down with him for a few minutes. The heat from your body will make his stomach warm and ease the pain, and the walking will probably put him to sleep.

4. Sometimes we see children who are very thin and do not seem to grow as they should. These thin, weak children are often troubled by coughs and fever. What is the matter with those children, and what can we do to make them stronger?

A thin child often has worms living inside his body. These worms produce a poison in the body which makes the child weak. If your child is like this, try to take him to a hospital for treatment. The doctor will give a medicine which kills and drives out the worms, and the child will grow much stronger. Children get worms by eating dirty food, drinking unboiled water, or getting dirt inside a cut or sore. The eggs of the worm are in the dirt or water. When they enter the body they hatch out and grow—sometimes very big.

Sometimes a child is thin and weak because he is not getting the right food. There are two things that will help a child like this very much. One is milk to drink every day. Perhaps the child will not want to drink the milk at first, but if you make him drink it for a time he will soon grow to like it. The other thing is a medicine called cod-liver-oil. This is expensive and many people are not able to buy it, but if you can get a bottle and give your child a spoonful every day during the rainy season it will help him to grow strong, and it

will be very good for coughs and colds. Palm-oil is good if you cannot get cod-liver-oil.

If you have a baby and young children in your house try to get these few medicines, and keep them ready to use :

1. A small bottle of castor-oil (the native-made oil is good) to use if your baby has diarrhœa or a bad cough, and for constipation if you have no better medicine for that.

2. Some powders for constipation (from a doctor or dispenser) or some senna pods.

3. Some honey to mix with lime-juice to make cough medicine.

4. Some clean pieces of cloth or bandage to cover cuts and sores.

In some towns it is the custom to circumcise girl-babies as well as boys. There is a church rule against this, but many people do not understand why it is wrong. Circumcision is helpful to boys, but it spoils a girl's body, which is quite different from that of a boy, and it often causes very bad trouble when she grows up and is giving birth to a child. Many Ibo women die in child-birth only because their bodies were harmed by circumcision. Do not allow any girl-baby to be circumcised, or any young girl, if you can prevent it.

I wonder if you know why I asked you to read the story of Naaman and Elisha before studying this last lesson? When Naaman came to ask Elisha to cure him he thought the Prophet would cure him by magic or by giving some wonderful medicine. When Elisha told him to go and do a simple thing like washing in the river he refused. Yet it was by doing this simple



thing that he could be cured. In these lessons I have told you many small and easy things to do for your children. Many of you will think it is no use to do small things like these. I have not told you of any wonderful medicine. Perhaps you do not understand the reason for doing some of the things I have told you. But do not be like Naaman and refuse. God can help your children through these small things if you are faithful and do them. Remember, you and God are working together. His power is mighty, and it is this power which will help us and our children if we obey His laws.





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